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A
S E R M O N

PREACHED before the
LORDS Spiritual and Temporal,
IN THE
ABBNEY CHURCH of St. *Peter*,
Westminster;

ON
Friday, March 12, 1762.
Being the Day appointed for a PUBLICK
FAST and HUMILIATION.

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD,
R. Ever
JOHN, Lord Bishop of *Landaffe*.

L O N D O N:
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MDCCLXII.

Die Lunæ 15mo Martii, 1762.

ORDER'D by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, in Parliament assembled, that the Thanks of this House be, and they are hereby given, to the Lord Bishop of *Landaffe*, for the Sermon by him preach'd before this House, in the Abbey Church, *Westminster*, on *Friday* last. And he is hereby desir'd to cause the same to be forthwith printed and publish'd.

Ashley Cowper, Cler. Parliamentor.

PROVERBS, Ch. XXI. Ver. 31.

*The Horse is prepared against the Day of
Battle, but Safety is of the Lord.*

THESE Words contain this evident Proposition ; that human Endeavours, and the Divine Assistance, are jointly necessary to the Success of all human Affairs. Our own Endeavours God hath left in our Disposal. But how shall we procure the Divine Assistance ? What can we do ? What effectual Method can we take, to secure to ourselves that also, without which we cannot be safe ?

This is a Question of great Importance, and proper to be resolved on this Occasion. But how shall we resolve it ? How shall we miserable Sinners discover the Means of moving the Mind, of inclining the Will, and of
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obtaining the Favor of God most holy, most wise, most high, invisible eternal King, Creator and supreme Governor of the Universe? How shall we find Access to his Glorious Majesty? What Demeanour, what Rites, what Form of Words shall we employ?

If we, together with all the Inhabitants of this Land, do this Day afflict our Souls with Fasting; and come into the Divine Presence, with sad Countenances; hanging the Head like a Bull-rush, and cover'd with Sackcloth and Ashes; will this Ceremony suffice? Will this sad Solemnity, and transient Performance? will a short Abstinence, and the outward Gesture and Habit of Mourning, assum'd and worn for a Day, prevail on that holy and omniscient Being, who looks into the Recesses of the Heart, and requires Truth in the inward Parts? Alas! all this external Shew is often and easily acted by Hypocrites.

Suppose then that we do more; that to our Fasting and Sackcloth we do this Day add the Confession and Lamentation of the crying Sins of the Nation.

Here

Here much might, and something ought to be said, to excite our Sorrow for the national Iniquities. Not that I think it needful for me, to paint in the blackest Colors, and aggravate with a studied Rhetoric, the Vices and Corruptions of the Age we live in. They alas! without any Aggravation, afford but too much Cause of the profoundest Sorrow: And Men are willing enough to confess the general Transgressions; no Man meaning to include himself in the Confession. Besides, should it be roundly represented and insisted on, that the whole Nation is universally corrupt in the highest Degree, so that there is not a righteous Man left, no not one; what Effect could such a Representation produce in us? What else, but Astonishment, Amazement, and flat Despair? Such aggravated Accusations must needs offend many, could reform none, and might easily be repelled and refuted. For were the Measure of our Iniquities indeed so overflowing full; the Vengeance of God, I am persuaded, would not have suffered us to exist, to this Hour, as a Nation upon Earth. But, blessed be his

B 2 Mercy,

Mercy, we do exist ; and not only exist, but even prosper amidst all our Difficulties. His Justice hath greatly plagued us for our Sins ; but his Mercy hath also supported us under all the Plagues he hath sent upon us ; and not only supported, but also given us many great and glorious Successes against our Enemy. These Successes are an indisputable Evidence, that God still deals with us as Objects of Mercy ; that he hath not quite abandoned us to Despair ; consequently that some Sparks of Piety and Virtue are somewhere still alive ; that some considerable Number of good Men, or, at the lowest, that ten righteous are still left among us. Nevertheless, amidst so much Bad, though there still be some small Remains of Good ; though the Nation be not one continued Sore, so that there is no sound Part in the whole Body ; yet we must all acknowledge, that it is grieved with many Sores, and sick of many Sins ; Sins so many and so grievous, that were our Eyes Fountains of Tears, we could never sufficiently deplore them. It is then manifest, in the most candid View of our Condition, that we have too much Cause of the deepest Grief and Humiliation.

Say

Say then (for I resume my Argument) that we are thoroughly sensible of the Greatness of our Iniquities ; and that we do this Day confess and lament the crying Sins of the Nation. If we do so ; yet it must be remembred, that a general Confession of the Sins of the Nation, is but a very vague, and indeterminate Confession of Sin ; a Confession that comes Home to no one Person ; corrects no particular Sinner ; nor abates the Multitude of Transgressions ; and consequently cannot be sufficient to atone the Displeasure of God, and to gain his Pardon and Favor.

Suppose then still further, that we do not only confess and lament the public Transgressions ; but moreover, that the whole Nation do this Day, with united Voice, address their humblest Prayers to the Throne of Grace, and implore the God of all Mercy, to forgive, to spare, to have Compassion on his People. But after all these Prayers, what, if we shall not be found to be indeed his People ; if there be in our Hearts no Reverence of his Laws, nor in our Lives any
Conformity

Conformity to them ? To repentant Sinners his merciful Ears are ever open, and his fatherly Compassion is ever ready to embrace and forgive every Transgressor, who returns to his Duty. But without a Return to Duty, Vehemence and Loudness of Prayer is but as sounding Brass or a tinkling Cymbal.

Still farther, in Aid of these our Devotions, may we not presume, on Behalf of ourselves and Country, to plead before God the Excellence of our Laws and civil Institutions, together with the Equity and Moderation, with which they long have been, and still are administred ; humbly beseeching Him to preserve so just and wise a Frame of Government ; and for the Sake of that, us also the Subjects thereof ? May we not also, with humble Confidence, appear before that awful Tribunal, to which these Kingdoms have appealed ; there order our Cause, and declare in the Ears of God the Wrongs and Violences committed by our Enemies against us, and the Right and Justice on our Side ; praying the righteous Judge of the World, that a favorable Sentence may soon come forth from his Presence, and put a speedy
End,

End, if it be his Will, to the long, wastful, and bloody Controversy ? Or if it be not his Will, that the Calamities of War should presently cease ; that then he would vouchsafe to infuse into our Hearts, Spirit and Resolution to endure to the End ; till, at his appointed Time, Peace shall revisit this Land, and bring Refreshment and Healing in her Wings, to a deep-wounded and overlaboured People. And may we not, with still better Hopes, plead yet one other Plea, presenting before God that which is the most holy Thing among us ; even his pure Religion profest and established in this Land ? These are all, indeed, very hopeful Recommendations to the Divine Favor. The Profession of God's Truth, the Justice of our Cause, the Excellence of our Laws, and the equal Administration of them, cannot but be acceptable to the righteous and supreme Governor of the World. Nevertheless, if we, who have all these Advantages on our Side, do by our Sins and Vices render ourselves unworthy of them, and personally displeasing unto God ; how then can we expect, that for the Sake of those outward

ward Advantages, our Persons should be accepted by Him? Great Advantages abused, are so far from being an Extenuation, that they are a great Aggravation of Offences.

Now if all these Rites, and Tears, and Prayers, and Pleas, are not of themselves sufficient to obtain the Favor of God; what more remains to be done? whereon shall we finally rest our Hopes? To avert the Wrath of God, and to obtain his Favor, there is one Thing essentially necessary; without that one Thing, all other Methods will prove defective. That one Thing is no hidden Mystery; but hath always been, and must for ever be inculcated into Christian Ears. It is Repentance; real and sincere Repentance; a Repentance, that produces an actual Diminution of our Sins and Vices, and a real Increase of Piety and Virtue among us. This is the one Thing necessary, and solves the Question proposed; *viz.* What we can do, what effectual Method we can take to secure to ourselves the Divine Assistance. To this Method, if we would be safe under the Shadow of the Almighty,
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we must all betake ourselves ; every one for himself ; not barely confessing the general Offences, but each Man lamenting more especially his own proper Transgressions, and amending his own particular Life and Manners. For the Sins of the Nation are made up of the Sins of Individuals, and can no otherwise be diminished than by the Reformation of Individuals. Is it not then in every Man's Power to reform himself ? If it be, 'tis also in every Man's Power to contribute Something towards appeasing God's Wrath, and procuring his Protection, and consequently towards saving himself and Country from Ruin.

To apply what hath been said more closely to our own Case ; let it be here considered, that every Kind of Virtue doth indeed recommend Men to the Favor of God ; but those particular Virtues, that are most proper, and most adapted to their present Circumstances, are more especially attended with his Blessing. The Providence of God, placing Men in such or such Circumstances, doth, by so placing clearly and distinctly,
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call them to the Practice of all Virtues corresponding with those Circumstances ; and unless they obey that Divine Call, they have no Reason to expect the Divine Assistance ; for God carries no Man through Difficulties, who doth not first exert all the Powers of his Nature. Different Virtues are adapted to different Times. In Time of Ease, Safety and Tranquillity ; Patience, Courage, Constancy, and all the hardy and rougher Virtues of our Nature having no Object to work upon, lie dormant in our Breast. But when the Storm of War hath disturbed the Calm of Peace ; then those rougher Virtues come into Season : And those Virtues being in Season, however rough, are bound upon us by the same Ties, which oblige us, in calmer Times, to the Exercise of the more humane Graces, of Quietness, Gentleness, and Meekness. These hardy Virtues have long been in Season among us ; alas ! too long : For the Exercise of them, though sometimes necessary, is never desirable. They still continue to be in Season ; and God only knows, when they will cease to be so. In the mean while, that God, who planted the
Seeds

Seeds of them in our Nature, hath made them a Duty ; a hard and severe, yet a necessary Duty. The Times call aloud for them ; and till the Times shall change, it is the Will of God, that we exercise and cultivate them. O ! may they soon become useless, and out of Season. But till the Providence of God shall bring about that happy Day ; we must be valiant, or be undone. We must be patient and persevering. We must play the Men, and trust in God ; if we expect his Blessing. We must not despond ; nor spread evil Reports, that may create Despondence in the People, and make them prefer an Egyptian Bondage to hard-earned Liberty. Despondence is a certain Way to Ruin ; it robs us of our own Strength, and, by distrusting Providence, forfeits the Divine Protection. For God will certainly desert those, who have first deserted themselves.

It is not then enough barely to seek the Favor of God, by all the Means and Methods of Religion possible to be employed : But moreover, if we desire to prosper, or

to be safe from the Dangers that encompass this Nation ; the most vigorous human Means must concur with the Divine Assistance. Now as to the human Part incumbent on us ; what we ourselves ought to do, by our own Endeavours, towards our Defence and Safety : This will appear in the clearest Light, if we but glance an Eye on the State we are in.

We are in a State of War ; War of many Years Continuance ; the Flames whereof, which lately seem'd expiring, suddenly broke forth a-fresh, with increased Fury. In this State, our Lives and Fortunes are at Stake ; our Religion also, and our Liberty, those two great Blessings, which constitute the peculiar Glory and Happiness of these Kingdoms : And these our invaluable Birthrights are, in this happy Country, common as the Air we breathe : Common to the poorest and meanest, as well as to the richest and greatest. The Consequence is plain, that it is the Duty and Interest of us all, of every Person of every Rank, to be most strenuous and most zealous in the Support and
Defence

Defence of these great and common Blessings.

It is our Interest in Respect both of Earth and Heaven ; for should the Ship sink, all who are embarked in it, and every worldly Thing that is dear to them must sink with it. And should our Enemies prevail, our Religion too is lost ; our pure Religion, which is hateful to them for its very Purity ; and, as long as it shall exist, must for ever be a Reproach to their own. Instead of a holy Worship and Doctrine, and instead of Christian Liberty of Conscience, we should soon see Papal Superstition and Tyranny first established by Law ; and afterwards propagated by Fire and Sword, and all the Catholic Arts of propagating a Lye.

As to our Duty in this Respect ; Men want rather to be awakened, than instructed on this Point. Doth any Man then dread Infamy on his Name, and the universal Detestation of all Mankind ? If he do, the Deserters and Betrayers of their Country are undoubtedly the most infamous of Men, ever
detested

detested by all, as the most execrable of Parricides. Doth a good Name? Do the Commendations and Praises of Men sound as Music in our Ears? If they do; the Defenders and Preservers of their Country are the Delight and Glory, not only of their own Times, but, after their Removal to Heaven, their very Memories are still beloved and adored on Earth; and continue to be a perpetual Theme of Praise to all future Generations. Have we in our Hearts any one good Affection? If we have, the Name of our Country contains in it every Object of Love; all the Charities of Parent, Husband, Wife, Children and Friends. In short, if there be one Duty fastened on Man by stricter and more sacred Obligations than any other; it is the Duty which every one owes to his Country. It is bound upon us by many Bonds. By Justice and Fidelity; for can Multitudes be combined in Society, and not stand engaged to mutual Defence and Assistance? And may this Engagement be violated without Perfidy and Injustice? Gratitude requires this Duty of us. For to what else, but to the Laws of our Country,
are

are we indebted, for the secure Enjoyment of our Lives and Fortunes, our Religion and Liberty? And do these Benefits require no Return? Charity recommends this Duty to us; yea, rejoices and glories in it, as her noblest and largest Object. Delight you, in doing Good? To defend and serve your Country, what is it else, but doing Good, not to one or a few Persons, but to many Millions at once? Love of our Country is Charity. It is Charity of a wide Extent, always embracing in its Affection, and often benefiting by actual Services, a whole Nation. This is a Charity unknown, perhaps, to narrow-minded Superstition; but, in truly pious and virtuous Hearts, it dwells, lives, and moves; and powerfully animates the noblest and most generous Natures. The Breast of the private Citizen may well feel its Influence and Warmth, and, within his Sphere, move by its Impulse: But the ampler and more illustrious Acts thereof can hardly be perform'd but in the higher Stations. It is therefore the peculiar Ornament and Glory, the proper Characteristic of Kings, of Princes, of Nobles, of Patriots, and

and Heroes of every Kind. Without it, they are not truly, what they pretend to be, or what their Stations denominate them. The Doctrine is evident, is important, is seasonable. I will repeat it again. Love of our Country is Charity. It is a sublime, a God-like Degree of Charity. Our Benevolence, our good Wishes, and Prayers can indeed, and ought to extend to the whole Race of Mankind; but the Beneficence, the real and actual Services of so limited a Creature as Man, can very rarely, and very hardly reach beyond the Bounds of one Nation. It is therefore manifest, that national good Deeds are the highest and most diffusive Acts of Charity, that Man ordinarily hath Opportunity and Power to perform.

Having then so many Motives, and lying under so many and so sacred Obligations; if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praise; think of these Things. Lay to Heart the Duty you owe to your King and Country. Perform it without Chicane and Evasion, with Fidelity and Zeal. To this, your bounden Duty, add Repentance
toward

towards God. Forsake your Sins ; be pious ; be virtuous ; be firm, waiting patiently for the Lord : And humbly implore his Favor and Assistance, ever acknowledging your Dependence on him, and constantly trusting in his Goodness and Power. On these Conditions we may entertain good and certain Hopes, that God will finally bless us ; that this Nation will at last be delivered out of all its Troubles ; and thenceforth continue long to flourish in Peace, in Riches, in Power, and in Liberty.

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towards God. Forgive your sin; be clean
for sinners, be strong, waiting for the
the Lord: And humbly implore the Father
and Alliance, over acknowledging
Dependence on him, and constantly
ing in his goodness and power. For this
Condition we may expect good and true
tain Jesus, that God will surely do
that this system will be the witness and
of all its truths, and its power will
the song of praise to God in heaven, in
Power, and glory.

